



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

SABBATH-SCHOOLS EXAMINED ON THE BIBLE.

BY REV. WILBUR F. CRAFTS, D. D.,

New York City.

In order that Christian workers might know in what lines their help is most needed, written examinations of the older scholars (those above twelve) in representative Sabbath-schools of all denominations in all parts of the nation and Canada, were arranged for the June and September review days of 1887, not on the current lessons but on "First Principles." About three thousand printed blanks were accepted by the superintendents of thirty Sabbath-schools. Eighteen of these superintendents, on second thought, concluded that discretion was the better part of valor, and stayed out of the contest. A thousand blanks were accepted by the older pupils in the other dozen Sabbath-schools. Five hundred and seventy-seven were ashamed to hand in their replies. The four hundred and twenty-three blanks were returned. None of the dozen Sabbath-schools were missions, so that the result shows how much is known of the Bible and of Christian doctrines by the best half of the older scholars in our church schools.

The first question in the blanks, "Why do we call the Bible the Word of God?" is first in importance as well as in place, since inspiration is the doctrine now the most debated and always most fundamental to the whole structure of Christian faith. (In the replies to this and all the other questions, answers whose errors are only in spelling, capitalization and grammar are counted "correct," although these errors are sometimes noted, and should have due attention.) Many answer the first question (with varying spelling), "Because God inspired men to write it," "Because it was given by divine inspiration," "Because it is a revelation of God's will;" but "inspiration" and "revelation" need defining even more than what they are used to define. The same is true of the answer, "Because it was ordained by God." A large number think the Bible is the Word of God "because it tells all about God;" but that definition belongs to the creeds, catechisms and theologies, which tell far more about God's decrees and plans than the Bible does. Many agree (except in spelling) in the answer, "Because the Bible is the Book of truth;" but it is a lie to assume that all other literature is made up of lies. "Because it was wrote by God," "Because it is a collection of words spoken by God," "Because it comes direct from God," "Because it came down from Heaven," "Because it came from our dear Lord," and many answers of the same import recall the fact that in a large town where there were many churches, a lady who was speaking to a union meeting of children about the Bible, on asking how it came to us, got these same answers in substance from all the children, except one who had just returned from daily drill in the "Children's Hour" at one of the Chautauquas. He alone knew that God used men in making the Bible.

In only one of the examination papers is there even an attempt to quote the catechism in answering this question about inspiration, and that one calls the Bible, "the infallible rule of faith and guidance." Better miss in memory than meaning, but best of all not miss in either.

Attempts at a Bible answer to this question about inspiration come within one of being as rare as attempts at a catechism answer.

Several answer (with the usual variety of spelling), "Because it was written by the dictates of God." Two boys, by a remarkable (?) coincidence, answer, without even a letter of variation, "God made the words but told different men to write it." A kindred answer is, "Though written by men we believe God put the words in their mouths." This erroneous idea of inspiration as divine dictation appears in many definitions. Those who know that men had something to do with making the Bible seldom know enough to give a correct answer. Instead of exact knowledge they show only disturbed ignorance. Many say (with deformed spellings of various kinds) that "God told his disciples to rite it." Others say that it was the "apostols," others that it was "Moses," others that it was the "prophets," who were told to write the Bible. One says "Prophets and disciples," an answer which is right if both words be taken in a wider sense than the writer probably meant them. He doubtless thought the same as another who answered, "Prophets and apostles," not knowing that Mark and Luke were neither. From three schools come five papers giving for answer that pernicious phrase by which the prophets of the New Theology seek to put the Bible on probation, "We call the Bible the Word of God because it *contains* the Word of God" (*italics* ours). Several declare that they think the Bible is the Word of God, "Because it is," which is improved by one who thinks it is "Because." "Because it is truly the Word of God" comes from a boy who evidently wishes to make the impression that he always calls a thing what it "truly" is, but to speak "truly" of him we must say that this answer, all but the "truly," and some of his other answers entire, was stolen from the boy who sat next to him.

The Sabbath-school which gave the best answers to this first question is one which had been trained, in the "Memory Episode" of its general exercises and its week-day children's meeting, to understand and memorize this definition: "We call the Bible the Word of God because God guided the hearts of the writers so that they would not write anything He did not wish them to write. 'No prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men spake from God being moved by the Holy Spirit.'"

It is a significant illustration of the fact that the simplest definitions need explanations to prevent their being parroted in unmeaning phonetics, that the above definition reappears in two papers as follows: "So that he called the hearts of the writers the hat did not which them to write." "No prophecy ever came before God by the will of man." But all the other variations of this definition that appeared were such as to prove that the writers had not missed the meaning. Thirty-three gave it with substantial accuracy, and twenty-four others gave correct definitions, making fifty-seven out of ninety-six, leaving thirty-nine inadequate answers even in the Sabbath-school whose record on this question (though not on some others) was the best. In no other Sabbath-school do the answers indicate that even a majority of the older scholars (much less of all) have a correct and clear idea of inspiration. Three-fourths of the four hundred and twenty-three papers either gave no answer at all, or an erroneous one.

Here it will be appropriate to say that no school answers even fairly well on any topic that has not been a subject of special memory drill.

The second question, "What is the first verse in the Bible?" though the easiest in the list, has served a good purpose in the blanks as a test of accuracy,

which is closely related both to truthfulness and honesty. Those who quote for the first verse of the Bible, "In the beginning the Lord made heaven and earth," or "In the beginning was the Word," or leave out "the" before "heaven" or "earth" or both, will need watching when they come to keep accounts or make reports, unless their parents or teachers previously train them to greater accuracy. He who does not report God correctly can not be relied upon to report exactly the conversation of his fellows. In the four hundred and twenty-three papers returned, this easy opening verse of the Bible appears correctly only one hundred and twenty-five times, most of the others not being blanks but misquotations. "Little things are little things, but to do little things faithfully is a great thing."

The third question, "What is God's Commandment about the Sabbath?" by calling for one of the longer commandments as a sample, shows through the replies whether the commandments have been generally and correctly memorized. Many knew this commandment well enough to keep step with a crowd in repeating it, but cannot write it correctly. In the four hundred and twenty-three papers, this commandment is given correctly but thirty-eight times. The papers of an Episcopal school show but two accurate out of thirty-seven, many of the mistakes being due to mixing up the Bible version with the Prayer-book version, which this examination furnishes a good reason for displacing. The only Sabbath-school in which there are more correct than incorrect answers is one that took the blanks home to answer "upon honor." In the attempt to write this commandment the same mistakes often appear and may be consolidated, except a part of the omissions, in the following "*reversed* version:—"Honor the Sabbath to keep it holy. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them. Six days shalt thou labor and perform all thy work, but the Sabbath is the Lord thy God's; in it thou shalt do no work, thou, nor thy wife, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's. Wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it."

Many who have not been taught to say, "I don't know," instead of proving it, who have not learned that a blank is better than a blunder, that room is better than rubbish, that an acknowledgment of ignorance is more creditable than a pretense of knowledge, extemporize rather than memorize. The following is a sample: "Said that ye should not spend the Sabbath day with pleasure but keep it holy and not visiting for the sake of see a friend. If you want to keep the Sabbath Day holy go to church and keep away from bad company." Another sample is the following: "Thou shalt not forget the Lord and on the Sabbath thou shalt remember me not pleasure or picnics." Another of these improvised commandments is, "Don't let the Sabbath day profane for the Lord made heaven and earth and all that is in the midst for the Lord rested the seventh day and hallowed it." Another of these papers furnishes a commandment that would suit those who are at ease in Zion, namely, "On the seventh day thou shalt do nothing." Another of these "new" commandments—the only reply to this question about the Sabbath in which the extemporizing has even the smell of catechism—is: "Though shalt remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Though shalt not do any work on the Sabbath. Six days shalt though do all thy work and on the seventh rest from all worldly care and *think on God* our maker." We may rejoice that even these blunderers understand so well how to keep the Sabbath; but the fact that the young people of twelve and more in our Sabbath-schools are so many of them

unable to quote the commandments correctly, after ten years in a Sabbath-school or in a Christian home, or in both, ought to be regarded as great a disgrace to all concerned as if the same youth could not say the multiplication table after ten years in a public school. In the answers to this question and to every other in the list, the schools of the various denominations and of the various sections of the country are as alike as peas in a pod in their deficiencies. Even the British school which was one of the dozen replying, fits into the pod with no mark of superiority. The defects discovered are international.

One requirement of the examination-papers was, "Write some Bible verse that shows how a sinner may be saved from sin and hell." Surely that ought to be answered by any one who has been ten years or more in a Christian home or Sabbath-school, or both, as quickly as a grammar-school pupil would answer a call for the first three letters of the alphabet. Especially ought the many young Christians who worked on these papers to have been as ready to answer this question with a dozen texts as a carpenter to give the names of his tools. What are the facts? The papers abound in such improvised Scripture as the following: "Jesus said, Let the sinners come to me and I will save them." "Believe in the cross and thou shalt be saved from sin and hell." "Believe on the Lord with all thy sole all thy heart and all thy Body."

It is a matter of congratulation that only three speak of being *saved by works*, "by going to Sunday-school, not getting in bad company, not going and playing instead of going to Sunday-school," "by keeping the ten commandments," "by doing his commandments," as if the Bible did not say that such an idea, which is not confined to children, is charging Christ with dying for nothing at all (Gal. 2:21). But even when an answer contains the correct idea, it is no trifle to misquote God. When one is seeking to be saved, he needs, not "some little word of mine," not a diluted tincture of Scripture, but the very Word of God to rest upon. The total result on this question is, that the four hundred and twenty-three papers yield only eighty-four appropriate texts, correctly quoted. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," is the favorite, and appears fifty-seven times. The next most frequent text is, "God so loved the world," etc. But both of these are misquoted as often as they are given correctly in every school except the two which took the papers home "upon honor," which make no mistakes on either text, but are not counted in the total given on this topic. The passage which affords the simplest and fullest answer to this question, for children, is John 1:7-9, which is not given at all in the replies except a fragment or two in several papers. This needs to be supplemented by such clear words as Romans 10:9,10 and Hebrews 12:1,2, most of which a child can understand.

Another requirement of the examination, "Write one or two Bible verses that tell why Jesus died on the cross," brings to view the same class of mistakes as have just been noted, inaccuracy in quotations, improvisations of Scripture, and pious platitudes. The most frequent answer is, "Jesus died to save sinners," which certainly is not "one or two Bible verses." The passage which ought to be quoted oftenest, as it is the clearest and completest and best adapted to the comprehension of childhood, Romans 5:8-10, does not appear at all, except in a fragment or two, nor does the next best statement of this subject for childhood, Isa. 53:5,6, appear with any frequency.

Two other requirements of the examination were as follows: "Write some Bible verse that tells what becomes of the wicked after death." "Write some

Bible verse that tells what becomes of God's people after they die." Appropriate texts, correctly written, are the exceptions; blanks, or worse, the rule. The strongest answer both in regard to heaven and hell, Matt. 25:46, is given a few times correctly, oftener imperfectly. A frequent answer to the first of the questions is, "The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God," which the Revision now shows, as commentaries have shown before, is only a reference to the fact that the vices of the wicked, whether individuals or nations, hurry them prematurely to the grave, to "Sheol." Texts about Heaven are much more frequent in these papers than texts about Hell, though it is not so in the Bible, a fact whose significance is not uncertain. Extemporizing Scripture on this crucial doctrine of hell is peculiarly unfortunate; but the following are only samples of what is found, in place of God's exact warnings, in many papers: "Depart from me ye workers of iniquity into a lake of everlasting fire prepared for you." (The Bible says that the fire was prepared for the "devil and his angels," and the "mansions" for men.) "The wicked shall go away into everlasting death." "They are cast into everlasting eternity." "They are cast into Hell's fire and the devil's hands." "The wicked shall go to the devil and his angels." (Now we know who gets up "corners.") Such crazy quilts, made up of texts imperfectly remembered and teachings imperfectly understood, occur in scores of papers under each of the questions that call for Scripture answers.

Are the results of the examination discouraging? Nay, they should be only arousing. To use a medical figure, if one finds, by an insurance examination, that he has dangerous symptoms, for which, however, a sure cure is at hand, he congratulates himself that he has been warned in time. Deficient as our Sabbath-schools are in knowledge of the Bible, there is no proof that the youth of our land ever understood or practiced its truths more than to-day, and so, in the face of the facts given, we should go forward to better things, with the motto, "Always encouraged, never satisfied."

SOME LEVITICAL USAGES.

BY PROFESSOR JOHN G. LANSING, D. D.,

New Brunswick, New Jersey.

The Hebrew word *Kaf* used in connection with the offering of incense, is, in the A. V., translated "spoons" twenty-four times: as, e. g., Exod. 25:29; Num. 7:14; 1 Kgs. 7:50, *et al.* The R. V. follows the A. V., translating "spoons." Thirteen times out of these twenty-four it occurs in the seventh chapter of Numbers. Elsewhere this Hebrew word *Kaf* occurs frequently, and always has reference to the palm of the hand or the sole of the foot. We have precisely the same word in Arabic, *Kaf*, which is used with the same meaning of the palm of the hand or the sole of the foot. The rendering of this word *Kaf* by "spoons" is misleading. It has reference properly to a kind of *censer*. What kind of *censer* this was, and why it was so called, we are clearly informed by the old Egyptian sculptures and inscriptions. In the temple of Seti I. at Abydos, King Seti is represented in the act of offering incense. The vessel in which he offers the